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## Professor wins UNESCO chair

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*Spectator Staff Writer*

Professor of Economics and Mathematics and director of the University Program on Information and Resources Graciela Chichilnisky was recently appointed the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) chair in Mathematics and Economics.

The recently-created UNESCO position was designed to approach global environmental issues in the context of social, economic, and cultural factors.

UNESCO is an UN agency designed to facilitate international scientific cooperation.

The Program on Information and Resources was established in 1994 as

part of the Global Systems Initiative (GSI), an interdisciplinary plan to organize many departments and programs within Columbia in order to study environmental sciences and earth systems on a global level.

According to Vice Provost Michael Crow, the GSI is Columbia's response to the challenges of global management and earth systems research.

According to Chichilnisky, who holds doctoral degrees in both economics and mathematics and teaches in the statistics department at Columbia, her field involves an interdisciplinary approach to "the transformation of society into a knowledge society driven by information technology, and innovative thinking but the conservative use of environmen-

tal resources."

Some of Chichilnisky's ideas focus on the widely-used concept of "basic needs," such as shelter, food, health care, adequate medical facilities and basic education, which she says countries should meet for their entire populations before developing their economies further.

Chichilnisky, a native of Argentina, also advocates the creation of an

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## Chichilnisky gets position at UN

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international bank that will sell, at market prices, the rights to produce certain chemical gases, thereby regulating many harmful emissions that cause global warming.

Crow described her economic theories as "radical," but said "The UNESCO chair is a validation and recognition of the importance of her ideas in global planning."

Chichilnisky said the UNESCO chair is a unique position that will

provide a network for Columbia professors and students to use to their advantage.

"The chair has the potential to bring in excellent scholars from Africa and Latin America, increasing the geographical and racial diversity of thought on campus," Chichilnisky said.

Chichilnisky said that, in her experience, students are very interested in interdisciplinary studies and environmental studies, but less in-

formed about the impact of economics and financial markets on environmental and development issues on the international level.

"Universities must take on bigger problems in society, in the United States and on a global level. You can't solve physical problems without economics," Crow said.

The UNESCO academic chair was initiated and awarded by the UN, where Chichilnisky worked for 18 years.